MONTEREY NEWS

December 2005
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The Town

Finance Committee

Finance Committee members Debra Mielke and Dan Moriarty requested that the scope of traditional audits be expanded to include how each different town department has performed within its budget, and how it justifies overages when they occur. Moriarty said that traditionally the Finance Committee has a voice in choosing the auditor.

Finance Committee members specifically asked to have an outside state agency review Monterey's emergency response plan. They believe this audit is within their purview because the Finance Committee is an advocate for taxpayers when it allocates tax dollars for various purposes. Moreover, the committee members would like to know if the town's emergency plan has state approval.

Moriarty said that the state's Office of Emergency Services would provide assistance for this project, and that additional funds could be solicited at a special Town Meeting. Select Board Chair Michèle Miller, whose preference is to solve problems locally, voiced her reluctance to invite the state to set any standards for

Edie Ross

Monterey was filled with unidentified ghouls, ghosts, skeletons, and other things that go bump in the night on All Hallow's Eve. Edie Ross managed to snap this evidence, as Stan headed for the nearest exit.

anything in Monterey unless the town knows precisely what is at stake. Moriarty agreed that handling matters locally is ideal, but stressed the need to go outside the traditional emergency service individuals for evaluation purposes. The discussion was tabled until the next meeting of the committee and the Select Board.

The Finance Committee asked that the Capital Expense Planning Committee be overseen by a Finance Committee member, and, to avoid conflict of interest, that the Capital Expense Committee not include any person whose position or department would be affected by purchases.

The Finance Committee also requested a recap of expenses for road repair following the historic storm in October. Moriarty suggested use of the Monterey town website to let citizens know the financial details of the state's payment for storm damages. The committee believes it should review storm-related expenditures, particularly because the town is spending money ahead of its appropriations. Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier told the Select Board that FEMA will pay for 75 percent of the costs for repairs to the infrastructure from the October storm emergency, and that MEMA will pay for 12½ percent of the damages.

Christmas Party

For all Young & old

Dec. 11, at 1:30 PM

Hay ride starts at church for about one (1) hour, return to church for Christmas songs by:

Karl Finger

Refreshments and a visit from Santa for the youth.

Sponsored by Monterey Park Comm. & Coffee Club

The *Monterey News* is published monthly under the auspices of Monterey United Church of Christ, Monterey, MA 01245.

Moriarty asked if the Fire Chief plans on buying a pump for water drainage purposes. He and other Finance Committee members desire an accounting of the town's emergency services so residents can know what to expect in future emergencies.

Emergency Services

After Fire Chief and Emergency Services Manager Ray Tryon said that he does not agree with those who say that the October storm emergency was handled badly, a long discussion followed about how future emergencies should be overseen. Tryon said that it is the Emergency Services Manager who sets things in motion.

Miller asked that a trash pump be included in the next town budget, but Tryon disagreed strongly, asking, "Who's going to run the pump?" He does he not believe that emergency personnel should pump out basements. "Call a plumber for pumping water out," he said, wondering why anyone would want emergency workers to compete with plumbers.

Moreover, Tryon said, the Fire Company incurs liability by going onto private property and, while fighting fires is public safety, pumping out basements is not. Miller articulated the immediate need for Monterey to detail its relationship with the Fire Company, suggesting that there be a memorandum of understanding. Tryon said the Fire Company has its own policy, so Miller wondered if it could be negotiated, stating that town residents must know exactly what they can expect from the Fire, Police, and Highway Departments during emergencies.

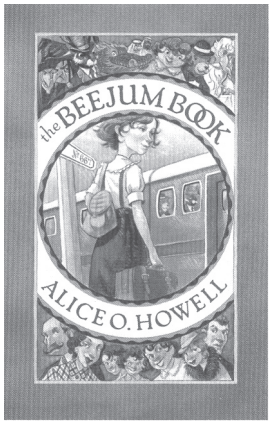
Highway Department

Director of Operations Maynard Forbes said that the road temperature during the season's first snowstorm on October 25 did not fall below 34 degrees, so there was no road sanding. During Thanksgiving week, though, the Highway Department used 100 tons of salt on the roads. The Highway Department tries to wash every truck after each outing to get the salt off, but if the weather is very cold they may not do the washing. The department uses a steam pressure washer.

Forbes told the Select Board that Tamarack Tree Cutting was hired by National Grid (the former Massachusetts Electric) to clear trees around electrical wires. The tree trimmers have promised that they will be trimming, not cutting. Forbes will insure that the company does not leave huge heaps of chips along the roads.

A dialogue about hiring another Highway Department employee continues between the Select Board and the Director of Operations. Although the Select Board deems it desirable to have a full-time year-round employee, Forbes will not add a new job in this fiscal year, although there is a

These wonderful books from Monterey's own Alice O. Howell make perfect Christmas gifts!



The Beejum Book will take its place with ***The Little Princess*** and ***Charlotte's Web*** as a perennial classic.

— Andrew Harvey, author of ***The Direct Path***

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strong possibility that such a position will be added to the 2006–07 budget request. Noting that Forbes will continue to do plowing this winter, Select Board member Jon Sylbert said that Forbes should be compensated for the extra work. Miller said the Select Board would resolve the question at a later date.

In response to public comments about how he is paid, Forbes called Town Counsel Jerome Scully for clarification on the Fair Labor Standards Act. Scully replied that employers can pay employees anything they want, so long as the salary meets the minimum standards. It is up to the Select Board to distinguish salaries from overtime and bonuses.

Select Board member Michael Storch reported that Riccardo Boehm, owner of the building containing the Monterey General Store, is seeking legal counsel to address his complaint about the flooding of the store's basement, due, he believes, to the historic dam behind the store. Storch suggested that the dam pool be dredged and has asked Forbes to investigate the situation. It may well be that the dam will need dredging on a regular basis.

Glynis Oliver

Sylbert contacted Congressman John Olver's office for information on state funding of historical dams in Massachusetts. The dam behind the Library and the General Store dates back to 1735, easily qualifying as an historical dam. Discussions continue about putting up a fence behind the Library for public safety.

Town Hall

When Town Treasurer Pat Mielke was solicited for advice on updating personnel policies for bylaw changes, she said no one model is used. She will look at Monterey's personnel policies and suggest changes.

Article 7 of Monterey's bylaws deals with personnel policies. Miller said that the Select Board's goal is to standardize sick leave, vacation policy, holidays, and contributory insurance. Mielke said that in Massachusetts, towns must pay at least 50% of their employees' health insurance. Monterey's policy is a 90-10 split.

The last sexual harassment policy the town implemented was in 1997, leading some to feel it is time to update it. Town Counsel Scully will send Lee's new sexual harassment policy as a model. The employee handbook, written in 1993, also will be updated.

The Select Board is also considering a bylaw revision that would transform the Tree Warden from an elected office to an appointed position. The board believes that this will allow for more oversight and accountability. The board has asked the current Tree Warden, Roger Tryon, for his input into changing this bylaw. Town Clerk Barbara Swan suggested that there be a special Town Meeting simply to amend the bylaws, and said that there must be notification of such a meeting sixty days beforehand when changing an elective official to an appointed one. >

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Adhering to town policy of notifying property owners that they are responsible for maintaining their property so it does not cause damage to town property, the Select Board notified the estate of Mac Carlson of a very high pile of wood behind the house, Dick Tryon about the removal of logs from Rawson Brook, and Nancy Kalodner of the necessity of maintaining the correct beaver population on Heron Pond.

Storch reported that an elevator inspector visited Town Hall and found one foot of water under the elevator. Police Chief Gareth Backhaus pumped it dry, which is how it remains.

Monterey approved the concept of an Agricultural Commission at its May 2005 Town Meeting, and one was appointed by the Select Board in the summer. The state must be notified about the commission because having one boosts the town's ability to get state grants. When asked to notify the state about the commission, Swan said she did not know how to handle it, so the commission chair has been charged with the task.

The Select Board is providing warning posters to be put on trees stating the necessity for landowner permission to hunt on private property.

A T1 line for Internet connection has been installed at Town Hall. The frequent telephone problems at Town Hall generated a discussion about the possibility of reinstalling telephones. Given the expense of such a project, no action was taken.

Police Department

Chief Backhaus reported on a lockout on Beartown Mountain Road and a disabled vehicle on Fairview. A report that a car may have been casing a road turned out to be Jehovah's Witnesses canvassing. The Rodriguez-Benjamin dog was found barking at children on the road in violation of a police order, but the owners left for New York City before police could respond. Backhaus is checking into the options available to the Police Department for this violation. Owners of a new house in town have two dogs, both of which caused complaints from neighbors. Inquiries will be made about their licenses.

The police were unable to respond to a burglar alarm at the top of Mt. Wilcox because the road was washed out, but the alarm turned out to be the result of some young people having a party there. Hunters on protected land on Swann Road were warned that they were trespassing, and departed. A town police officer located a runaway from Gould Farm.

A longtime troubled youth who grew up in Monterey was arrested in late October for speeding on Route 23 and for driving without a license. The arrest occurred at 9 a.m., but at 9 p.m. that night, the perpetrator was found driving his car again, at which point he was arrested by the Stockbridge Police Department.

A vehicle went off Route 23 early one morning, hitting the crosswalk sign and dragging it to the post office. Despite the untoward movement of the crosswalk sign, Backhaus reports that it is slowing drivers down as they approach the center of town. During checks for inspection stickers, the Police Department cited an individual driving with a suspended license.

There were false alarms on Wellman Road and Sylvan Road. A downed tree limb on Art School Road pulled wires down, leaving the road with no power for a short time. Another tree branch across wires on Sandisfield Road caused problems. There was an abandoned 911 call on Blue Hill Road, a lockout of a motor vehicle on Art School Road, and the towing of a disabled motor vehicle on Hupi. The Monterey police assisted Great Barrington police in two motor vehicle accidents.

Backhaus requested that Monterey modify its procedures so that the detail police officers have a minimum of eight hours, typical in most departments, rather than our current minimum of four hours. The only people who can legally stop cars are police officers, so they are needed when roadwork is underway. Detail work is generally overtime.

Animal Control

Tritown Health Inspector Peter Kolodziej addressed the Select Board

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about Monterey's problems with beavers, saying there are a number of problem sites and that there is no easy solution. Because dams can deteriorate and collapse, it is vital that landowners learn about the risks and liabilities when ponds are not maintained. He suggested that the town identify major beaver sites and that an official meet with the major property owners abutting them for collective decision-making on correcting the problems. Options include trapping, installation of water level devices, or even lowering the level of the dams, although that would require permission of the Conservation Commission and the landowners. Kolodziej said he can recommend wildlife experts to assist with monitoring and maintenance.

Monterey has been assuming the financial liability of maintaining a clear waterway on an individual's property, but the Select Board seeks to reallocate the financial burden. The board agrees that it is the property owners' responsibility to maintain a safe situation. Miller suggested that Monterey continue to maintain culverts but that landowners should handle the water level issue.

Discussion on filling the role of Animal Control Officer continues. After another lengthy discussion of what an Animal Control Officer does, Kolodziej said that typically the officer combines the roles of Inspector of Animals and Dog Officer. Currently Bob Danielli is the Inspector of Animals, and as such he handles nuisance animals for liquidation, as well as dealing with rabid dogs and cats. Police Chief Backhaus suggested that the Board of Health, which oversees this issue, officially create the position of Animal Control Officer to include both functions.

Building Inspector

Building Inspector Don Torrico issued a permit for Gould Farm to pour the foundation for a new building.

Torrico noted that 148A, a state act passed in 2004 following the tragic night club fire in Rhode Island, allows for Building and Fire Departments to work together if problems are found on job sites. Torrico believes that he could write tickets for violations. He told the Select Board that each municipality is required to have a hearings officer, certified by the state, who is paid $2,000 annually.

Because Torrico continues to work more hours each week than he believes is commensurate with his salary, Miller asked him to submit a regular report on his hours for the Select Board's information. Ray Tryon reiterated his view that the Building Inspector's salary is too low. Tryon believes the job is important and needs a higher salary to pay for the time needed to do the work correctly. He pointed out that Torrico's office brings in more money than he is paid. Tryon also said the $3,880 paid annually to each member of the Select Board is less than other neighboring towns, noting that Sandisfield just raised its annual select board salaries to $5,000. Tryon suggested that each Select Board member be paid $10,000 annually.

Torrico asked to receive a zoning map that delineates each zoning district. He is putting together three emergency packets for town use in case of a tornado or flood so that emergency personnel or building officials can assess damage by street address.

Torrico reported that the owners of Seven Stones plan to convert a single-family dwelling unit to a boathouse. He inquired if this change in use requires review by the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Board of Health. The former camp property has been divided into five building lots. The Keswick camp owners are planning to sell land for a cell tower on the property.

Gerry Shapiro told the Select Board that it was a pleasure to work with Torrico, and that she found him quick in his response to her questions.

Housing

Fred Chapman and Michael Storch represent Monterey at the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's Community Housing Trust Steering Committee. Storch reported that Monterey must find where the town can provide affordable housing. Miller suggested that the town file an application for evaluation of the Wilson-McLaughlin property, plus the area behind the Firehouse. The application would be for a community development

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In response to a question about using land in preservation for affordable housing, it was noted that such land is always held by an agency, such as the Monterey Preservation Land Trust or Berkshire Natural Resources Council.

Wilson-McLaughlin House

Seven members of the Wilson-McLaughlin House Committee discussed the proposed lease of the property from the town to the newly formed nonprofit Friends of Wilson McLaughlin House while the house is being renovated into a community center. Committee member Joe Baker read the lease and its accompanying memorandum of understanding. Questions arose over specific issues, leading to discussion and revision. The revised documents will be reviewed by Town Counsel Scully on behalf of the Select Board and by lawyer Dennis Downing on behalf of the FWMH. Miller announced a ceremony on Monday, December 5, at 11:00 a.m. when the Select Board and the FWMH committee will sign the lease.

Education

Assistant Town Clerk Linda Thorpe reported an unofficial count of Monterey's school children: 39 in the district, 41 out of district, 13 private school, 8 home schooled. She believes the number of out-of-district students will increase.

Monterey School Representative Deborah D. Mielke reported to the Select Board that the school budget process is beginning, and that she is on the committee that negotiates with the teachers' union. This year they plan to do collaborative rather than collective bargaining. Mielke also asked to be reappointed to the Edith Wilson Scholarship Committee, since the school representative typically sits on it.

The Select Board will ask Superintendent Valerie Spriggs who has been assigned to shovel at the Monterey School.

This and That

Board of Assessors member Stan Ross told the Select Board that the third tax bill of the year will be estimated since the board is still a long way away from determining the new tax rate. "We can't even guess what the figure will be," he said. Ross pointed out that every house in Monterey has been looked at by the firm hired by the board, and that Assistant Assessor Don Clawson has had to re-measure many of the houses because prior measurements were wrong. Ross assured the Select Board that Massachusetts General Law allows for estimated tax bills if paperwork is backed up.

After a motion by Miller, Kathleen Wasiuk was appointed as a 5-year alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals through June 30, 2010.

Miller announced the need to appoint a committee to write the town's Annual Report. The $1,000 budget for the report covers printing only.

Dan Moriarty presented the Select Board with photographs of the damage done to his home on Lake Buel during the atypical rainstorm in October. He said that since roughly 31 homes along the lake were inundated with water, perhaps the town could provide a tax abatement to pay for damages. Storch reminded Moriarty that he and his neighbors live in a floodplain, opening themselves to damages typically associated with floodplains.

— Laurily K. Epstein

Fair Trade Gift Sale at Gould Farm

Looking for that perfect gift this year? Want to give something meaningful? Come to the second annual Fair Trade Holiday Gift Sale on December 3, 2005 from 10 a.m.–4 p.m. at Gould Farm. Handcrafted items from around the world, including baskets, jewelry, Christmas decorations, children's gifts, soaps, household decorative items, musical instruments, and much more will be sold. These goods are purchased from A Greater Gift, whose mission is to "promote social and economic progress of people in developing regions of the world by marketing their handcrafts and foods in a just and direct manner." Visit agreatergift.org to see some of the beautiful items we will have for sale.

This event is sponsored by the Monterey United Church of Christ, and will be held at the Harvest Barn at Gould Farm. From Route 23, turn onto Curtis Road; at the stop sign turn left onto Gould Road, then right at the Harvest Barn. This year the event will be held upstairs; just follow the signs. If you have questions, call 644-0041. Thanks for supporting this wonderful cause and happy shopping!

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Community Potlucks Begin with a Bang

The community potluck season began in November with a lecture on the "Big Bang" by Monterey resident Richard Edelstein, who was able to illuminate this daunting topic for each and every listener—from the astronomy-savvy to the scientifically challenged. With his rich background as docent at the Hayden Planetarium, we hope to have him back in the future with more astronomical information. Thank you, Richard.

Clinical social worker and creative arts therapist Eileen Lawler will be our speaker at the December 14th potluck. Her topic, "Been There, Done That—Now What? Redefining Meaning & Purpose in the Second Half of Life," was first presented on the Queen Mary II ocean liner (New York City to Southampton, England) in June 2005 when Eileen represented her employer, Canyon Ranch, as its wellness consultant on board. She and her cockapoo, Teddy Bear, are full time Monterey residents who can be seen walking by Lake Garfield daily.

Thanks to Bill and Pam Johnson, we have the loan of a PowerPoint projector for Eileen's talk. We are putting together a list of friends who are willing to loan audiovisual equipment to us for future presentations. If anyone has a slide projector or other equipment you are willing to loan, please call Dianna Downing (528-3381) or Steve and Sally Pullen (528-9243). We also badly need a podium.

Everyone is welcome at the dinner that begins at 6:00 p.m. in the community room at the Monterey Meeting House. Please bring something to share, a serving utensil, and a place setting for yourself. In case of bad weather, check the church answering machine (528-5850) for a message about cancellation or postponement. This year the potlucks will take place on the second Wednesday of the month from November through May. Watch the *Monterey News* for program information.

MONTEREY LIBRARY

Monday.....7–9 p.m.
Tuesday ..... 9:30 a.m.–noon
Wednesday .....3–5 p.m.
Saturday ..... 9:30 a.m.–noon
.....7–9 p.m.

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Monterey Church Christmas Schedule

Worship through Advent will be as usual, at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Our Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols will be at 8 p.m. on Christmas Eve, December 24. The offering taken up at that service will be to benefit the relief efforts of Church World Service in Pakistan following the Oct. 8th earthquake when some 79,000 people were killed and more than 2.5 million people were left homeless. With winter coming, these people are at terrible risk, and with the world in a state of crisis overload, the need of Pakistan in particular has gone largely unnoticed. It will be our joy to give to this effort during this season of gratitude and giving. Please join us for worship. All are welcome.

On Sunday, December 25, we will meet for worship at our usual time, 10 a.m., for singing and sharing in Christmas goodwill. All are welcome, and please come as you are on Christmas morning, even if still in your pj's!

Education Committee Survey

The Monterey Education Committee has produced a survey for parents of school-age children in town to ascertain their educational goals and preferences for their children. All parents with school-age children are encouraged to fill out the survey so that we may better serve our community's educational needs.

Copies of the survey are available online at http://www.monterey-ma.org/Public_Documents/MontereyMA_SchoolDistrict/index. Copies of the survey are also available at Town Hall.

Please drop off completed surveys to the Town Hall or mail to: Education Committee, Monterey Town Hall, P.O. Box 308, Monterey, MA 01245. Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this survey.

Bidwell House Benefit Party

The Bidwell House Board of Directors invites the local community and supporters of the Bidwell House Museum to a Holiday Cocktail Party on Saturday, December 3, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the home of Eric and Holly Montgomery on Fairview Road. A donation of $35 per person to the Bidwell House Museum is payable at the door or you can make a reservation by calling the Bidwell House Museum at 528-6888.

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Monterey Store Knitting Circle Begins

On Wednesday, December 7, please join us at the Monterey General Store from 6:00–7:30 p.m. for the first meeting of the Monterey Knitting Circle.

We are looking for experienced as well as novice knitters and crocheters to help each other out. Our goal for the evening is to have each person knit/crochet an afghan square that will be joined with the others to form an afghan that will be donated to a worthy cause. We will take suggestions on the cause at the meeting. The store will be closed for business but open for creative giving, thanks to the generosity of Kenn Basler, store owner.

If you cannot make it that evening but are already a knitter, please consider dropping off an 8 in. by 8 in. square, knitted or crocheted, for us to use. There will be a basket in the store on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of that week for drop-offs.

We are also looking for finished hats, scarves, and purses done in shades of pink to send to the "Knit for a Cure" sale to raise funds for breast cancer research through the Komen Breast Cancer Foundation in February 2006.

Please help Monterey to help others, join us if you can, knit some things for a cause if you will.

Thank you.

— Debra Mielke

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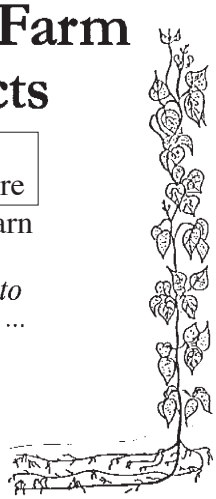

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Community Center: Feels Like We're Shifting Gears

The current Wilson McLaughlin House Committee has been meeting weekly for well over a year now, and I feel we are nearing completion of the first phase of the project.

• We have clearly identified our goal: to secure the gift of land (28.8 acres) that Edith Wilson bequeathed to the town by the creation of a Monterey Community Center, thus fulfilling the stipulations in her will that her house be maintained and used for municipal purposes.

• We have formed a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation so that we can raise money for the project through grants and personal donations that will be used solely for this project.

• At Town Meeting in May, voters approved our request to lease the house from the town for the duration of the fundraising and actual work on the house.

• As this goes to press, Town Counsel is reviewing what we hope will be the final version of the lease and an additional document further defining our arrangement with the town. The grand signing of these agreements is set for December 5th. We are excited.

We are being thorough and thoughtful at every turn, and it has taken months of work to get these pieces in place. With the tedious formulation of definitions and legalities behind us, we can start turning more actively toward the community as a whole for ideas and help.

In an effort to hear more from all corners of town, we are holding two Community Center planning meetings with representatives from as many of the town's organizations as we could think of. The first one has happened already. A dozen or so participants offered ideas and observations that were very helpful to us. We need to hear what sorts of things people would like included in the project, and we need to gather wisdom from hearing about the experiences of others.

As I left that meeting it struck me that the Community Center was already beginning to do a community service. A group of people got together and shared ideas for the common good. Over the winter we will be having a series of similar meetings open to everyone. If you have a moment, please check out our web site, www.cc-monterey.org, to familiarize yourself with the project. If you feel you won't be able to attend any of the future meetings, you can e-mail us your ideas and thoughts. The address is on the site.

— Susan Sellew

Dual Homeowners Corner Wintertime

Winter Wonderland is not a myth in the Berkshires. The dancing winter stars, the sparkling, crackling ice on the lakes and ponds, and the sleeping pine trees on the hills, holding the white caps of recent snow, are harbingers of the Winter Berkshire Season. Making a path to the lake in order to take advantage of the winter season becomes a necessity, not only for the comfort of a cozy cottage, but as a way to reach our ski equipment and get ready to go to the Butternut ski area for a glorious adventure.

After a day outdoors, warming knees and toes in front of fireplaces and potbelly stoves becomes a satisfactory replacement for dangling toes in the clear lake water. Winter silence has a different kind of beauty. Emerging from this environment, visions of spring projects flow out of family conversations about the placement of flowers, building stonewalls, and the new color of the rail around the deck. Who will paint it, who will select the color, and who will clean up become the topics of the family conversation. Conversations that never, by themselves, distract from the enjoyment of a cold winter evening in the Berkshires.

The ice-covered ground down to the lakeside is never a threat to a kid and an open cardboard box. Flexible flyers take a second seat to corrugate cardboard. Ice skates and warm rubber-soled boots are suitable to navigate the frozen lake, and we are cozy and warm in polar fleece hats, jackets, and pants. The glorious sunshine and blue sky enhance this experience.

Thank you, Tom, for helping me write this selection. I am looking forward to hearing from other Berkshire residents.

— Barbara Haver

Brewster Painting at Bidwell House

Edie Ross

Jake Martin and Evan Sylbert opted for the treat instead of the trick on Halloween. But which one . . . ?

Most residents of Monterey know the Bidwell House Museum and its exceptional collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American decorative arts and furniture. In a place of honor as a visitor enters the Keeping Room is an oil painting of Sarah Spring Gray—mother-in-law of Barnabas Bidwell, the second generation of the Adonijah Bidwell descendants. Barnabas commissioned three paintings in oval frames by itinerant artist John Brewster, Jr.: one of Barnabas, one of his wife, Mary Gray Bidwell, and one of her mother. The artist frequented this part of the Berkshires and it is possible that other paintings by Brewster are owned by long-time residents. There is a revival of interest and popularity of paintings by John Brewster, Jr.

The first comprehensive exhibition of portraits by Brewster, hailed as "masterpieces of American painting," is now on view at the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, NY. The exhibit, "A Deaf Artist in Early America: The Worlds of John Brewster, Jr.," features 50 outstanding paintings from Brewster's masterpieces. The exhibit is open until December 31st; thereafter, the Brewster show will move to Orlando, Florida; then, to the Griswold Museum in Old Lyme, Connecticut; in the fall of 2006, at the American Folk Art Museum in New York City; and then to the Portland Museum of Art in Maine.

Brewster was born in 1766 in Hampton, Connecticut, a seventh-generation descendant of Elder William Brewster, a Mayflower pilgrim. In 2004, Harlan Lane, Distinguished Professor at Northeastern University, published the foremost Brewster biography titled *A Deaf Artist in Early America* (Beacon Press). Harlan's book was catalyst for the new interest in Brewster; as Harlan explains, "In some ways he was like the other itinerant painters of his day, but in important ways he was not. He didn't really need the money, and consequently he was prepared to spend much more time doing something really depictive of the sitter's personality and circumstances. Whereas most of the itinerant limners, as they are called, couldn't make a living if they did that, they had to move quickly."

Harlan's book explores this extraordinary artist, who did not learn to use sign language until he was 51 years old, in four worlds—the Puritan world he was born into, his Federalist elite family life, the deaf in early America, and his distinctive painting style and techniques. Brewster's depiction of Sarah Spring Gray is indicative of his elite clientele. Although he was rooted in European art techniques, he "moved beyond that rigidity to achieve a directness and intensity of vision that has rarely been equaled." Paul D'Ambrosio, Chief Curator at the Fenimore Art Museum, said, "John Brewster, Jr., transcended his personal challenges to leave an astonishing legacy," and that to see a John Brewster portrait is to catch a glimpse of early America "through the eyes of someone who lived in a world of silence."

The three paintings commissioned by Barnabas Bidwell form a set. Mrs. George Cochrane gave the Sarah Spring Gray portrait to the Bidwell House Museum in 1990; the portrait of Barnabas Bidwell is in a private collection of a Bidwell descendant living in New Hampshire, and the location of the portrait of his wife, Mary Gray Bidwell, is unknown. Area residents may view the Brewster painting at the Bidwell House Museum when the museum season begins in the spring or by appointment. Williams College Museum of Art also has a John Brewster, Jr. painting of an unnamed child.

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Library Notes

Our book discussion group for nine-to-twelve-year-olds had a great start in November. Franny Huberman and the children made a talking stick to pass around, making sure everyone had a chance to speak, and discussed their favorite books. Eleven excited children attended. They decided to participate in the Massachusetts Children's Book Award program, sponsored by Salem State College. The college has nominated twenty-five books, including many different types and even styles of literature. To be eligible to vote the children need to read at least five of the twenty-five by March. We welcome readers of any age to pick up a list at the library and vote for our own award from Monterey. Children in grades four through six will be able to send their votes in to the college and help choose the statewide winner.

At the next discussion, Monday, December 5, at 7 p.m., the children will each report on one of the books they have read from the list, and the campaigns for favorite books will begin. We will be handing out copies of *Storm-Blast,* by C. Parkinson, which we will discuss at the following discussion on January 9. Using lines from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," this contemporary story is set in the Caribbean. Three children are separated from their parents and face different challenges as they drift further and further from safety.

We have many of the twenty-five books available—stop in and get your list.

Some of the New Books:

Adult Fiction

Lighthouse, P. D. James
Mary Mary, James Patterson
Stalking the Puzzle Lady, Parnell Hall
Batteries Required, Jennifer Apodaca
How to Seduce a Ghost, Hope McIntyre
Light from Heaven, Jan Karon
At First Sight, Nicholas Sparks
Breath of Snow and Ashes,
Diana Gabaldon
Christmas Guest, Anne Perry
Gabriel's Angel, Nora Roberts

Adult Nonfiction

Furniture, Judith Miller
Family of Poems, Caroline Kennedy
Man without a Country, Kurt Vonnegut
Short History of Myth, Karen Armstrong
Teacher Man: A Memoir,
Frank McCourt
Crack in the Edge of the World,
Simon Winchester
Education of a Coach,
David Halberstam
John Paul the Great, Peggy Noonan
Exploring Stone Walls: A Field Guide to New England Stone Walls,
Robert Thorson
A War like No Other, Victor Hanson
Are Men Neccessary, Maureen Dowd

Young Adults

Secret School, Avi
Freedom Trail Mystery, Nancy Speck
Niagra Falls, or Does It, Henry Winkler
Freddy the Golden Hamster,
Dietlof Reiche

Picture Books

Honey Honey Lion, Jan Brett
Leaf Man, Lois Ehlert
When the Library Lights Go Out,
Megan McDonald

— Mark Makuc

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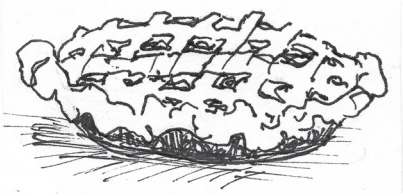
Deer-Hunting Season

The shotgun deer-hunting season opened on Monday, November 28, and will run through Saturday, December 10. There is no hunting on Sundays. The deer-hunting season for muzzleloaders runs from Monday, December 12, through Saturday, December 31, Sundays excluded. By Monterey bylaw, hunters must have written permission from the landowner to hunt on private land in Monterey. More information on hunting season and regulations is available at Town Hall.



A Less Wasteful Holiday Season

The holidays are full of emotions and incredible amounts of trash. In the five weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's, Americans add an extra five million tons of waste over normal, but there are ways of reducing that amount.

By making gifts and decorations, you can spend quality time with your family and reduce waste. Homemade food and gifts reduce waste and create social occasions for families or friends. Other gift ideas that prevent waste are movie or concert tickets and donations in someone's name.

To save trees and prevent waste, purchase a living tree so you can replant it in the spring. Be sure to bring a cut tree to a location that will turn it into mulch. It's a way of getting the tree's nutrients back into the soil.

A lot of waste is wrapping paper. Most wrapping paper can't be recycled because of products in them. Reusing comics or old calendars is an environmentally friendly way to wrap your gifts. To learn more about rewrap and alternative gifts visit www.newdream.org. Find other green holiday ideas at http://www.cetonline.org/Home/for_your_home.htm.

— Ryann Wolfe, CET Intern

Gould Farm News

At the recent annual meeting of the Gould Farm Board of Directors and Associates, Budd Mann and Richard Tryon, both of Monterey, Dr. Ellen Rowntree of Sheffield, and Steven Smith of Winchester, Virginia, were elected to the board. Jodi Briggs-Rathbun of Great Barrington, Peter Cherneff of Ashley Falls, Reverend Arthur Kaufman of Pittsfield, June O'Neill of New York and Stockbridge, Joan Rubinstein and Robert Rubinstein of New York and Monterey, and Monica Webb and Kathryn Roberts of Monterey were elected as associate members of the corporation.

Budd Mann retired from business in Doylestown and spent eight years working as a paralegal. He is currently involved with Tuesday's Angels, a nonprofit organization in Florida that helps AIDS patients who have no financial resources.

Dr. Ellen Rowntree recently retired as a psychiatrist/psychoanalyst in Westchester County. Dr. Rowntree was also an Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at New York Presbyterian Hospital.

Steven K. Smith is an Investigator and Researcher for the Public Defender's Office in Winchester, Virginia. Prior to this, he was a Staff Attorney for Southeastern Ohio Legal Services. Steven grew up at Gould Farm in the 1970s and 1980s, and subsequently worked at the farm from 1999–2003.

Richard Tryon is the owner of Lowland Farm and active in Monterey town government.

New associate members also bring valuable experience to Gould Farm. Joan Rubinstein has worked as a management consultant/corporate trainer, taught business writing courses and set up a transitional employment program at a psychiatric rehabilitation center. Robert Rubinstein is the founder of NASCO Construction Services, Inc., has taught for many years at NYU, and provides expert witness testimony in construction disputes. Jodi Briggs-Rathbun is a CPA and Assistant Vice President for commercial banking at Legacy Bank. She is treasurer and former board president of the Berkshire Community Action Council, and teaches part-time at the Center for Financial Training.

Peter Cherneff is a practicing attorney specializing in real estate transactions, development, financing, planning, and zoning and has served on the board of several nonprofit organizations. Reverend Art Kaufman is a retired Minister/Teacher at the Old Parish Church in Sheffield, serves on the Western Area Critical Incidence Stress Management Team and Pittsfield's Partners for Prevention, in addition to several other endeavors.

June O'Neill is Professor of Economics and Finance at Baruch College CUNY and Director of Baruch's Center for Business and Government, has served on the President's Council of Economic Advisors, and was a Research Associate at the Brookings Institution. Monica Webb has a wide range of experience in corporate copywriting, editing, speechwriting, and presentation development, was active in Traders Challenge: Stocks for Shelter, a stock-trading game that raised funds for women's shelters in the Toronto, Canada, area and served locally on the board of the Berkshire South Regional Community Center. Kathryn Roberts has been raising Icelandic horses in Monterey since 1997.

Music at the Monterey General Store

Thursday Night Music, 7–9 p.m.

December 1
David Reed

December 8: Night of Jazz
Allan Dean
Billy Barkin
Mark Caldwell

December 15
John Sellew
Tom Ingersall

December 22
Sky Smeed

December 29
Sammy Brown
Joel Schick

Special CD Release Party

Saturday, December 10, 7–10 p.m.

Our first CD, "Christmas at the Monterey General Store," with tracks from twelve of the musicians who have played at the store. All welcome.

Christmas Caroling

Monday, December 21, 6-7:30 p.m.

We will gather on the steps of the Meetinghouse across from the store and, led by Monterey's own Karl Finger, will sing all the old favorites. We will be joined by many of the performers on our CD "Christmas at the Monterey General Store" and will continue inside the Meetinghouse hall after 7:30 with hot cider, donuts, and more singing. All are welcome. Words and music sheets will be provided.

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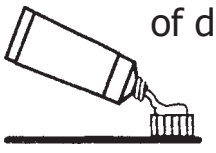

528-6520

Route 23 Monterey

On values: a Zen poem

I once knew
a very wise and venerable
old master
who farted when he walked —
the first time (like you!)
I was surprised and shocked —
the second time
I was surprised and readjusted
my sense of values —
the third time
I was surprised and pleased
that my sense of values
could be readjusted

perhaps, now that I am old
and have learned greater humility
I myself will fart
when I walk
and thus instruct others
on a method
of teaching.

— A. O. Howell

gathering
(for Tanya)

gathering to the house of autumn
to be fed, to be clothed and brought in
to the fire of family. the fire
of friendship, flickering in bright eyes
already sewn into the blanket
of turning leaves, the mountain's raiment
to prepare for the deep sleep to come
in the empty room where dreams come from

tripped on her own lovely wings, Angel
falls from the sky to keep our table
gathering, free of the dispersive
vehicles of ego, the curses
of the dark ages of our journey
gathering inward, upward, a sea
and seer of joy, our sibyl intones:
"if you never go, you never know!"

leaning over the old stone ruins —
this castle, once a fortress to lend
refuge, protection, a gathering —
I look out, the valley darkening,
bright crescent above, the lights below:
beautiful grand illusion aglow!
I see you in this miracle feast,
squeeze my hand, Angel, come walk with me

— R. Zukowski

Half Past Christmas: In Memory

Slipping through the notches
of separation —
between this world and the next
there must be a place we can meet again,
for the Earth is broad
and this air is deep —

so, farewell to
your white curls
in this wind-whipped field
where cranberry leaves
scatter without feather or wing, yet

laughter spills
over the blue pages of a dream —

together we'll write these stories,
spun down from fluttering light,
so your ladybug can sail
with fairies
on a rough and purple sea, and

we shall rise and meet again
for the Earth is broad
and this air is deep

in December, where
crystal flakes
feign indifference
to the ashes in their midst.

— M. Hamilton

Christmas Memories

Joys this generation misses
And perhaps will never know
Are the merry sound of sleigh bells
Ringing out across the snow
Bringing family home for Christmas.
Real candles on the tree
Decked out with strings of popcorn
A pretty sight to see;
Gilded English walnut shells
And chains of paper rings,
Little cut-out angels
And other home-made things.
The real spirit of Christmas
Was with us way back then
In dreams I go back to those good old days
And live them over again.

— Eleanor Kimberley

A Puzzle Poem

(What is it?)

A fiery furnace,
A ball of flame.
Never moving,
Always the same.

Black, red,
Orange and yellow,
Angry, fierce,
But seldom mellow.

This sputtering spark,
This glowing sphere,
Sustains life,
To us so dear.

— Jonah Carlson
Answer: the Sun

From the Meetinghouse . . .
On Darkness

It was a fierce thrill to be out so late under the dangerous press of darkness, familiar terrain now foreign to me under this shroud. It was a fierce thrill, knowing the need to stay hidden in the dark alone—behind the shrub, beneath the porch, inside the shed, in the shadow of the bulkhead—yet hoping also that I might be found, a friend after all conducting the search as if to rescue me from the dark alone. It was a fierce thrill—that sudden flash of light tearing the night, my wide, white face struck, my legs now electrified, ready to run. I was always slower than I needed to be, so I often was tagged and told, "You're it!"

Flashlight tag was my favorite, so rare as we could only play it on summer nights when the gentle warmth kept us lingering longer outside and there was no school to worry about the next day. My neighborhood teemed with kids my age; it was a small development of modest ranch-style homes, each about a half-acre away from the next with nearly no car traffic, yielding when it did come to kids on bikes and dogs asleep on the warm blacktop. So the boundaries of the game were far and wide—ten grassy yards from the Larrabee's to the Sullivan's and the woods behind each. The one who was arbitrated to be "it" through the unassailable system of "Eenie, meenie, miney, moe, (catch a tiger by the toe)," armed with a flashlight, would count to one hundred while the rest would scatter in the night, all our innards awash in adrenaline while we each braced ourselves for when we would hear hollered into the night, "Ready or not, here I come!" and would await in dread and hope to be struck soon by light.

It has escaped no one's attention, I'll bet, that, it being December, darkness has come to dominate our days. It might also seem darkness of a different sort—a more existential sort—dominates in ways that we find overwhelming. A bumper sticker I recently saw said, "If you're not appalled you're not paying attention," and I wondered at the perspective of the person whose car that was, because it could have been anyone from the secular humanist left to the radical religious right to the many who would put themselves somewhere in the middle, where a majority of Americans would place themselves but which seems oddly these days a no-man's land. From our small, ideologically specialized camps, we so often find ourselves appalled at the world around us and at those people in those other small, ideologically specialized (and, by the way, wrong) camps. This condition of being appalled can't be unrelated to the condition of living under a pall, which began its life as a word to indicate a velvet cloth for spreading over a coffin or tomb, but has graduated to a more conceptual meaning indicating anything that covers, shrouds, or overspreads, especially with darkness or gloom. And it is from this condition—of living under a pall, of being ever appalled and never at peace—that the prophet Isaiah promises we will one day be freed: "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken."

Sunday services in December at church are always a little disappointing. After all, we tend to limp full-stomached away from our Thanksgiving feasts ready to begin "the holiday season." But the church has a different agenda: now is the season of Advent, four weeks set aside to remind us that we live under a pall, that the Messiah who is to come is someone the world critically needs and perhaps even deeply desires, that the liberation God intends for the creation is not yet come and yet is ever coming, and moreover is what

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I for one really want for Christmas. It is a season when our hope is to be renewed, which is a challenge because hope comes not from denying our very real and often painful experience of life in the world; rather hope comes by facing our true experience without flinching, naming it without lying, and even still knowing in faith that what God has promised is now being fulfilled.

This darkness that sets the stage (in the northern hemisphere, at least) for the holiday season is easily offset by the artificial lights we use for decoration. You will find them all over the place, as you know, even in the meetinghouse windows. But the darkness itself should be remembered, and even revered, because it is here where the fulfillment of that ancient promise begins and it is here where we find ourselves, waiting and watching and working in hope that soon we, with the whole world, will be struck by true light.

I wish that this might be so for all who celebrate holidays remembering the darkness that seems to dominate, yet celebrating the light that cannot be overcome. Happy Holidays!

— Elizabeth Goodman

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Glynis Oliver

The Gould Farm field in the flats by Route 23 under flood waters from October rains. The water rose again after the rain on November 30.

Monterey Goes Solar!

Do you know that Monterey has already earned $6,590 toward a solar energy project because many households have signed up for New England GreenStart to support clean, renewable energy? If at least 3 percent of the town's households are enrolled from December 31, 2005, through March 31, 2006, the town will receive a $50 bonus for new enrollees and a $25 bonus for each household that enrolled last year. Your new or on-going participation adds to the pool of money that Monterey can use for a solar energy project.

If you haven't already enrolled in GreenStart, sponsored by the Center for Ecological Technology (CET), please consider doing so today. GreenStart costs an additional 2.4 cents per kilowatt hour, which you pay on your monthly National Grid (formerly Massachustts Electric Company) electric bill. You can enroll directly online at www.cetonline.org or call Raya at 413-445-4556, ext. 17. The December 31st deadline is around the corner, so act now.

Monterey lights (with solar and efficiency) the way!

— Laura Dubester, CET

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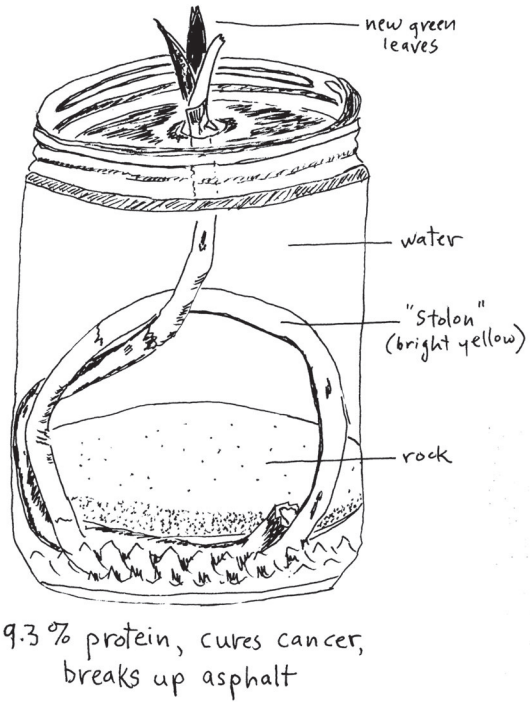
Daylilies: Never Off-season

You never can tell when scientific inquiry and revelation will come knocking at the door, but once you let them in they may sit down at your table and not get up. For instance, the tomato hornworms that appeared on my radar screen weeks ago as the most handsome and huge caterpillars I had ever seen. Here it is snow and ice time, and those creatures are right on the counter, occupying prime real estate next to the dish drainer. They are under the dirt in their Brita Filter Hornworm Habitat, and maybe they have died or maybe they will rise again in the spring as five-inch moths, my next moral dilemma as a scientist, a tomato gardener, and a human being.

Now, three feet away in a glass of water on the table, I have another visitor. This came from a dirt pile ten days ago, before the snow. Joe and I, amazingly, had gotten to work on driveway repair before it was too late. We had ruts to fill and leveling to do in order to be able to plow during the winter. The early October washout (twenty inches of rain, remember?) left our parallel ruts beat and eroded, with a high crown of grassy middle. We had a stash of dirt that had washed off the road into a couple of catchment holes we operate up along our pasture in an effort to prevent arroyos from sprouting down the slope.

We backed the truck up to the pile and began tossing dirt. Suddenly there sprang from my shovel a bright thing of yellow, looking like some crooked Romex electrical wire in a new color for 2005. But no, it was vegetable and had a nice smell, almost like you could eat it. (This is never enough for me; I did not eat it—not yet, anyhow.) I sorted out the yellow mystery material and kept shoveling. The next treasure, from the same dirt pile, also looked vaguely technological but from a distant solar system, or maybe the ocean. It had a center, with radiating strings, kind of stiff, that had shapely oval bulges in them. I could picture it humming through space with lights on at night, landing in an Iowa cornfield and disembarking small friendly beings. Like the orange Romex, it smelled good. I put it aside, curiosity and marvel mounting.



Then came the golden spike, another space (or marine) vehicle emerging from the dirt pile, but this time with yellow Romex attached AND at the end of the Romex, a small green shoot! This shoot was about half an inch long, flattened and pointy. It was absolutely a lily.

I took the treasures and set them up: one radiating vehicle of roots and tubers in a flower pot outside, one in a jar of water, and the yellow "stolon" in a vase of its own with the green leaf out the top.

After a week there is nothing above ground and visible happening in the pot outside, but in the house the space vehicle put out delicate rootlets in the water and started two sets of green shoots near the center, curving upward. The yellow Romex stolon began to look dried out and its green shoot turned pale. So I looped it up and put it in a jar to get it all under water, right up to its neck. This was made difficult by the fact that it wanted to float, so I set a rock in the jar to hold it down. Within three days it was completely recovered and its little shoot was sending up two new leaves.

We are off and running now in the daylily department. These are *Hemerocallis fulva,* orange daylilies, beloved on roadsides and by old cellar holes all over the country. They are not native (like a lot of us) and so are called "invasive." But like so many immigrants, they are useful and inspiring members of American society. For one thing, they are quite edible. You can cook the young shoots and leaves. The flowers and buds are good raw or cooked, and slightly wilted flowers can be dried

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and saved and then used to thicken soup. Someone has discovered that the dried flowers are 9.3 percent protein and a good source of iron.

The invasive orange daylily is a regular apothecary supply house of remedies: controls fever, alleviates pain, stops vomiting, purifies the blood, stops microbes in their tracks, counteracts jaundice and constipation, and can even cure pneumonia and cancer. Also, the juice of the roots makes a good antidote for arsenic poisoning. As if this were not enough, the dry foliage can be plaited into cord and used to make shoes and the plants can grow right through asphalt, so it's a good thing we do not have an asphalt driveway.

I've seen orange daylilies all my life, but it was thanks to driveway repairs and the use of the shovel that I got to know them below grade. Now I have scientific propagation projects indoors and out and can look forward to local pharmaceutical accomplishments and maybe even new shoes, thanks to the orange daylily. With the tomato hornworms down in the dirt, on the counter near the day lilies, I don't know just what I am looking forward to but it will be coming in the spring. With luck and brain food (9.3 percent protein in my diet—the daylilies), I will be able to respond to science and revelation in the spring.

— Bonner J. McAllester

Canine Good Citizens

Hayes HappyDog Training sponsored an AKC Canine Good Citizen (CGC) test on Tuesday, November 15. The test was held here in Monterey at the United Church of Christ. Eight handler/dog "teams" participated and the pass rate was an outstanding 100 percent.

Everyone had worked really hard to train their pets and ensure success, but it was still nerve-wracking to actually step out in front of the evaluator and know that ten different obedience challenges had to be completed successfully to pass and gain the CGC certification. Handlers were required to demonstrate good control over their dogs while milling through a crowd, meeting a friendly stranger, passing by another dog, etc.

The AKC designed the CGC to allow pet owners to train their dogs in all of the basic skills in order to receive an official certificate attesting to the good manners of the pet. Tested pets may not jump up on the evaluator or others present for the test, they cannot show any aggression towards the other dog, they must walk calmly without pulling on the leash and generally demonstrate that they are trained to be socially acceptable wherever they go.

The proud participants who won their certificates (and all deserve praise for their commitment to a well-trained and well-behaved pet) are:

Edith Rodegerdts and Juno (Great Dane);

Greg and Carrie Butler and Toby (chocolate Labrador retriever, the youngest CGC at five months);

Leslie Smallridge and Dandy (mixed breed, still a puppy at nine months);

Tish Thorpe and Kenya (Australian shepherd);

Shelly Ungemach and Daisy (mixed breed);

Debra Herman and Maggie (Icelandic sheepdog);

Marci Southard and Lily (Labradoodle);

Sherry Holm and Nell (Cavalier King Charles spaniel, and our elder stateswoman at eight).

At a time when more and more parks and public places are being put off limits due to the behavior of rude or out-of-control pet dogs, this program is a great example of dog owners proving with their time and effort that their dogs can be trained to be well-accepted good citizens of any community!

— Nora Hayes

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Coyote, Coy Dog, or Brush Wolf?

In The Berkshires, coyote pups are born in April or May, as many as six or seven to a litter. By early summer, their mother will often abandon the den where they were born and lead them forth into the countryside to teach them to hunt. In Monterey, coyotes are more often seen after hay fields have just been mown around Lowland Farm and Gould Farm. The pups learn to catch mice exposed in the short grass by watching and imitating their mother standing on her hind legs to locate one and pounce on it.

Before winter, the pups have learned from her predatory methods that were passed on from her own mother. The ability of this wily canine, classified as *Canis latrans,* to teach and learn between one generation and the next is a vital factor in Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest in combination with natural selection. The wily coyote has been able to adapt to urban and suburban conditions, and is remarkably comfortable living among its worst enemy. So what is the recent history of evolution that allowed this to happen?

The *eastern coyote* is much larger then its western cousin of the same species. Some males weigh up to sixty pounds. In Monterey, they keep pretty much to themselves, but the sudden appearance of one as large as a German shepherd in one's back yard can be alarming, often caused by leaving garbage or other food that draws them in. Small domestic pets may be seized, at night or in broad daylight, in the opportunity of an unguarded moment. Coyotes learned as pups by watching their mother catch their dinner to get between a woodchuck and its hole, and they consider a small dog or a cat fair game outside the house.

Coy dog is another nickname for the same critter, but derives from an attempt to explain the coyote's large size as resulting from crossbreeding with larger dogs. A male coyote can mate with a female dog, and a male dog with a female coyote. The resulting hybrids can also reproduce, but the chances of this happening with any frequency are very unlikely. In fact the possibility that such crossbreeding has any effect at all is so remote that I would preface such a tall story by "Long ago and far away ..."

Brush wolf as a more valid nomenclature that comes from the geographical origin of this species in the North Woods of New England States and across the Canadian border. There they are often seen in brushy clearings and appear as big as a wolf. The male coyote can breed with several species of smaller wolves, and their size overlaps. More significant is that coyotes run down larger prey by running in relays similar to wolf packs, and share other learned predatory methods. Most New England coyotes are believed to have migrated here from Canada, for the most part in the past sixty years.

As we experience and observe the renewed population of wild turkeys, coyotes, and possibly mountain lions in the Berkshires, humans continue to be instrumental in their return and the success of their survival. One may not believe in the theory of evolution because it conflicts with religious beliefs in biblical creation, and now the theory of intelligent design is also invoked to explain phenomena associated with the creation. Native Americans, who were closer to nature than the rest of us, have their own ideas about the scheme of things. David McAllester, who lived among the Navajos, tells me the coyote was thought to be somewhat of a deity in their legends of creation. He was also a trickster and mischievous.

I like this legend because it makes me believe that the coyote will survive here and be with us for a long time, living every day by its own wits and acquired wisdom, beating the odds stacked against its very existence.

— George Emmons

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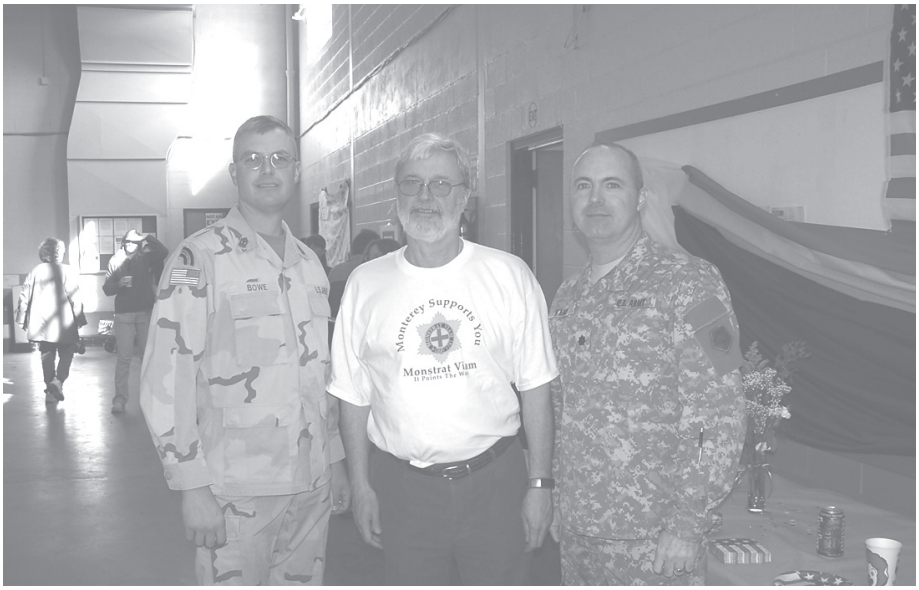
Soldiers Return

November 13th was a beautiful Sunday in Chicopee. The men and women of the 42nd MP Company of the Massachusetts National Guard were welcomed with great joy by hundreds of flag-waving family and friends as the returning soldiers marched up the hill to their homecoming ceremony at the new high school. I was invited as one of the many people from Monterey who supported these soldiers.

This unit received mail and gifts from MONTEREY SUPPORTS YOU, a group that raised money for T-shirts, and collected notes of support for the soldiers at the Monterey General Store during this summer. T-shirts imprinted with the battalion badge and motto and MONTEREY SUPPORTS YOU were given to the soldiers and their families and friends before the homecoming. A note sent by Alice DiTomaso of the unit's Family Readiness Group thanked us for "all your support for the soldiers and their families. Thank you also for your many kind and caring thoughts. The beautiful T-shirts were greatly appreciated."

I met the Battalion Commander and First Sergeant, who also thanked me. These soldiers grew serious when I told them Monterey was one of the Massachusetts towns that passed a resolution requiring the withdrawal of the National Guard from Iraq. I told them we still haven't gotten a reply from the Governor. They said they weren't really surprised.



Riccardo Boehm with Lt. Col. Brian O'Hare and First Sgt. Ric Bowe at the Nov. 13th homecoming of the 42nd MP Company of the Massachusetts National Guard.

The battalion traces its origins back to pre-revolutionary times as the First Corps of Cadets. One of its early commanders was John Hancock.

The company served since February in the combat zone around Tikrit in Iraq. All the soldiers returned home, despite many attacks. In his welcoming remarks, Lt. Col. O'Hare, the Battalion Commander, congratulated the citizen soldiers for completing their mission in support of Task Force Liberty with great distinction. He told us that the soldiers had gone through extraordinary months of hardships. "Some hardships you'll never fully understand," said O'Hare. "Some you'll never know about."

The Company Commander, Captain Dominic DiTomaso of Agawam, also complimented his soldiers on a job well done. He told stories of harrowing times in combat missions as well as of lighter moments, as when some of his MPs escorted the Commanding General to the wrong building for a press conference. He had particularly warm words of thanks for the families and friends for their support for the troops and their mission. He said he and his soldiers were proud of what they had achieved, and were grateful for public expressions of support and thanks.

MONTEREY SUPPORTS YOU will continue to support Massachusetts units in Iraq. The next effort is support for the 181st Engineer Battalion, the Minuteman Engineers, which just deployed to the Sunni Triangle. There are men and women from Berkshire County in the unit. They drill in Florence near Northampton.

— Riccardo Boehm

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Candle and Soap Making at Colonial Bidwell House

The Bidwell women who lived in our house for three generations were like all colonial and early American women—they wasted nothing. Despite the fact that they were more comfortable than most colonists, Theodosia Cotton Bidwell, Jemima Devotion Bidwell, and Ruth Kent Bidwell, Adonijah Bidwell's three successive wives, had to practice a rigid economy. In the colonial household, candles and soap were made by the women. Candles were the only means of lighting the house after dark and every household made candles at least once and often two times a year. Soap was available from England, but women were anxious to make their own and save what little currency they had for other things they were not able to produce.

Sometime in October or November when the leaves were falling from the trees, butchering started on the Bidwell farm. The fatty tissue from all the animals slaughtered was kept aside and added to all the grease collected over months of cooking on the open fire at the hearth. The fats and grease had to be cleaned of impurities, especially if the grease was rancid because of a lack of refrigeration. The fats from the animals were lined with meat tissue that had to be removed by a process called rendering. Rendering was an outside process; in fact, many of the steps in candle or soap making were conducted outside. The fats were placed in a large kettle with an equal amount of water and placed over a fire and boiled until all the fats were melted. This process took hours. More water was added and the mixture was cooled and left overnight. By the next day, the fats had floated to the top in a solid skin and the impurities were left behind in the water.

Candles were easier to make than soap; the process was called dipping. First you had to make a wick—twisting cotton fibers to form a string. These were looped over a tapering stick and dipped into melted tallow. The fats from sheep or cows were called tallow; the fats from a pig were simply called lard. The dipping provided a thin layer of tallow to stick on the wick; this was cooled and then received another "torrid bath" in the hot liquid. The slender wicks eventually took on the form of a candle that could stand upright in a holder.

The Bidwell House Museum has many types of candleholders and, perhaps the ugliest thing we own are the remnants of real tallow candles! Sometimes the dipping sticks were made of metal—but the easiest method was simply to get a straight stick from outside and then loop not just one, but many strings from the stick and have multiple candles dripping at the same time.

From articles in old antiques magazines from the twenties and thirties, we learn the origin of the candlestick in the "Jack Be Nimble, Jack Be Quick" nursery rhyme. The dipping stick was called a candlestick. Jack did not jump over a lit candle as often portrayed in children's books. Rather, his father or an uncle played a game at the end of the day—the straight dipping stick was held a few inches from the floor, and Jack was asked to jump over it; his father then raised the bar a little each time and Jack tried to jump over the stick at the increased height. It was an inexpensive game played around the hearth on cold wintry nights.

The solidified candles were kept in tin containers in the Keeping Room, near the central candleholder on a wall. These containers had to have secure lids because mice and other vermin would have loved to gnaw on the candles—animal fat, after all. Next time you visit the Bidwell House, look for the container, the tallow candles, and the tinsmith's new innovation: the candle mold. We have one made by a pewterer that can make as many as sixteen candles at once. It is fun to examine the mold and see where the wick, perhaps made from garden flax or cotton, was placed before the melted tallow was poured. It took twenty-four hours to cool; then the whole mold was plunged into hot water to loosen the candles. What a laborsaving device! Our colonial women knew how to deal with deer suet and bear grease, which could be poured into molds; however, bayberry or beeswax demanded a different processing.

Making soap was tedious and could be dangerous. Soap is not found in nature but is produced by a chemical reaction as in the production of bread, wine, cheese, and even pottery. To make soap, one must mix a fatty acid with an alkali—this process splits the fatty acids into their two components: fatty acids and glycerin. After they are split, the sodium part of the alkali joins with fatty acid part of the fat and then soap is made. This is called saponification. Colonial women knew how to make wood ash lye—a liquid solution of potash crucial to the production of soap.

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They saved all the wood ashes from the fireplaces and placed them in a bottomless barrel set on a stone slab on a pile of rocks. The women poured water over the ashes until a brown-colored liquid formed at the bottom of the barrel—this solution was the potash lye and it was collected in a red clay container. To make soap, you needed the rendered or cleaned fats and a mixture of lye. The liquid potash lye solution was added to the fats and boiled together to make soap. The colonial wife knew the correct amount of lye solution—not an easy task. She knew how long to boil the mixture outdoors: this was determined when a small amount placed on the tongue caused no noticeable "bite."

Soap made with lye did not produce a hard soap; it was a slippery brown jelly poured into a wooden barrel and used when needed. It made foam when mixed with water and therefore cleaned. To make a hard soap, the maker had to throw in salt at the end of the boiling process. But most wives would not have wasted salt—necessary for preservation of foods and for the animals—to make hard soap. However, hard soaps with scented oils such as lavender, caraway, or wintergreen were available in the towns and cities—made by soap makers and desired by all colonial wives; it was sold by the pound and cut from a large bar. Soap making was considered one of the most difficult tasks of the women so if a husband returned from town with a few ounces of scented soap, it was a great joy.

The Bidwell House has an extensive collection of redware—clean and empty on the display shelves. Docents at the Bidwell House would like you to imagine "filled" containers, storing a range of foods, sauces, herbs, pickles, and berries. Imagine the smells in the Keeping Room, which, by their very nature, permeated the house. Next time you light a candle for the approaching holidays or pick up the pristine bar of soap, please, as Abigail Adams often said to her husband, "Remember the Ladies" who came before us and feel blessed.(For more information go to www.alcasoft.com/soapfact/historycontent.html, *Antiques,* June, 1937 pp. 306–307, and www.bidwellhousemuseum.org, or call the museum at (413) 528-6888).

— Martha Dailey

Holiday Art and Craft Sale in New Marlborough

The New Marlborough Cultural Council is sponsoring a Holiday Art & Craft Sale on Dec. 2, 3, and 4. This community event includes a variety of artists and craftspersons from the local area. There will be paintings, pottery, wood carvings, photography, handmade gift wrap, and wool products, among other things. Lovely art and craft items make wonderful holiday gifts and decorations, so please join us at the New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery on route 57 on the green in New Marlborough.

Friday, Dec. 2, 6–9:00 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 3, noon–5:00 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 4, noon–4:00 p.m.

Remembering Lillian Wright

Lillian Wright, 88, formerly of New Marlborough Road, died October 30 at West Boca Medical Center in Boca Raton, Florida. She was a resident of Century Village West in Boca Raton.

Born in Mount Vernon, N.Y., on May 12, 1917, daughter of Nathan and Anna Ginsberg Beder, she graduated from Mount Vernon High School.

Mrs. Wright worked for various government agencies for over 25 years. She retired as a supervisor with the Veteran's Administration. She also worked for the Social Security Administration.

She and her husband, Michael Wright, moved to Monterey in the mid-1980s. She moved to Florida following the death of her husband on December 18, 2001.

She leaves a son, Dennis Wright of Hackensack, N.J.; two daughters, Meredith Wright of Hackensack and Beryl Hobert of Dumont, N.J.; and one grandson.

Graveside services were conducted on Friday, November 4, by Rabbi Andrew Klein of Hevreh of South Berkshire.

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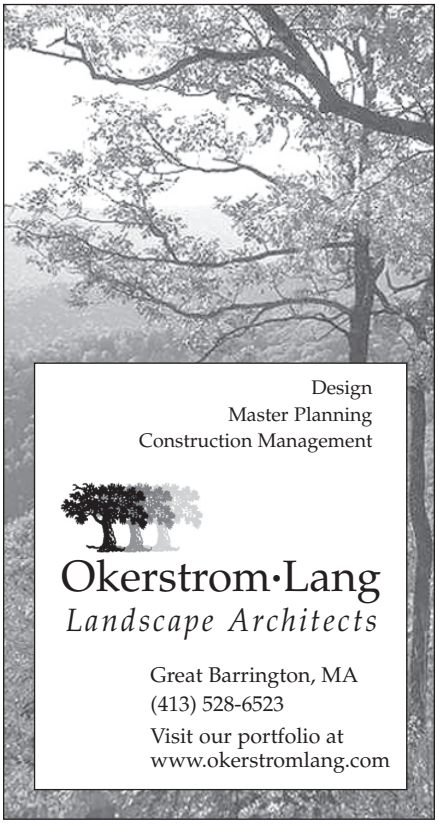

Coming Home to the Monterey General Store

Edie Ross

Tasha Tarnawa, Samantha Backhaus, and Ashley Backhaus (l–r), caught in their Halloween act.

How does one define home? As a new college student, I've been asking myself that a lot lately. I don't always have much time to reflect on it, but over fall break I realized that to a certain extent it is the familiarity of the location. That short visit, however, was not particularly relaxing, nor was it comforting like I'd expected. Having only four days here after being away for almost seven weeks, I felt too rushed, stressed, and disoriented to catch up with my previous life. Over Thanksgiving break I returned to what was my summer job, working at the General Store. During the three days I was working there, it struck me how much my community, or any one person's community, influences her or his definition of home. I saw so many people, family and close friends, and got the chance to catch up with their lives, always aware of Kenn's watchful glances.

I don't know quite how to describe it, so I'm going to bet that most people have experienced this relief and enjoyment over a return to somewhere special. While sweeping the floor, taking lunch orders, and jiving with my fellow workers, I slipped back into my life with an ease that caught me by surprise. Adjusting to a new life isn't easy, in fact it's sometimes downright awful. My college experience thus far has been incredibly rewarding, even with the difficulties. However those moments of trial and tribulation make the feeling of coming home all the more rewarding.

Perhaps what I am most grateful for is the thriving atmosphere of the store. During the years I was home-schooled, I spent a great deal of time there and have watched the store go through its ups and downs. Watching people enjoy their steaming coffee and tasty pastries, seeing them browse the wine selection looking for a perfect flavor for their holiday feast, or simply chatting in line while waiting to buy their goodies, delights me. The store is the heartbeat of our little town on this short stretch of Route 23. When Kenn asked if I'd be available to work a bit over Thanksgiving, I jumped at the opportunity. I had connected with people during the summer and had countless wonderful memories of my time there. Returning to work in the store would be a perfect

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opportunity for me, now an out-of-town resident, to immerse myself in the colorful fabric of our town.

Each day at the store I exchanged cheerful banter with Bonnie, tended the coffee pots (the new hazelnut cream flavor is delicious), looked forward to the people I would see, the jokes that would be played on me, and the stories that would be shared. Many of the people who saw me said, "They've got you right back at it don't they?" I'd smile at the truth of their words, but responded wholeheartedly that I loved working at the store. The reason is simple: it makes me feel like I'm truly home.

— Tarsi Dunlop

Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m.–noon, Town Offices.

Monday, November 28–Saturday, December 10: Shotgun deer-hunting season (except Sunday).

Every Thursday in December: Music night at Monterey General Store. Various artists. Starts at 7 p.m. See p. 11.

Saturday, December 3:

Fair Trade Holiday Gift Sale, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., Gould Farm Harvest Barn, featuring handcrafted items from around the world. See p. 6.

Bidwell House Museum Benefit Holiday Cocktail Party, 5–7 p.m. at the Montgomery's on on Fairview Road. See p. 7; call 528-6888 for information, reservations.

Monday, December 5: Book discussion group for nine-to-twelve-year-olds, 7 p.m., Monterey Library. See p. 10; call Library, 528-3795, for details.

Wednesday, December 7: Knitting Circle at Monterey General Store, 6–7:30 p.m. See p. 8.

Thursday, December 8: Free blood pressure clinic, 2–3 p.m., Town Offices, administered by Visiting Nurses Assoc.

Saturday, December 10: Special CD Release Party for "Christmas at the Monterey General Store," 7–10 p.m. at the store, featuring music of local artists. See p. 11.

Sunday, December 11: Community Christmas Party, 1:30 p.m. See p. 2.

Monday, December 21: Christmas Caroling, Meetinghouse. See p. 11.

Contributors

We thank the following folks for their recent contributions:

Jodi Lamanna
Janet Lampman & Keith Snow
Herbert Singer
Marie Leuchs
Hildegard Wolff

The Observer
October 26 – November 25

High temp. (11/6)	70°
Low temp. (11/25)	9°
Avg. high temp.	49.7°
Avg. low temp.	28.5°
Avg. temp.	39.1°
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow)	5.22 in.
Snowfall	8.2 in.

Precipitation occurred on 12 days.

Saturday, December 24: Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols, 8 p.m. Monterey Church. Everyone welcome. See p. 7.

Note: There will be no square dance at Sheffield Grange this month.

Sunday, December 25: Christmas Day.

Monday, December 26: Town Offices, closed for Christmas.

Sunday, January 1: New Year's Day.

Monday, January 2: Town Offices, closed.

Tuesday, January 3: Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m.–noon, Town Hall.

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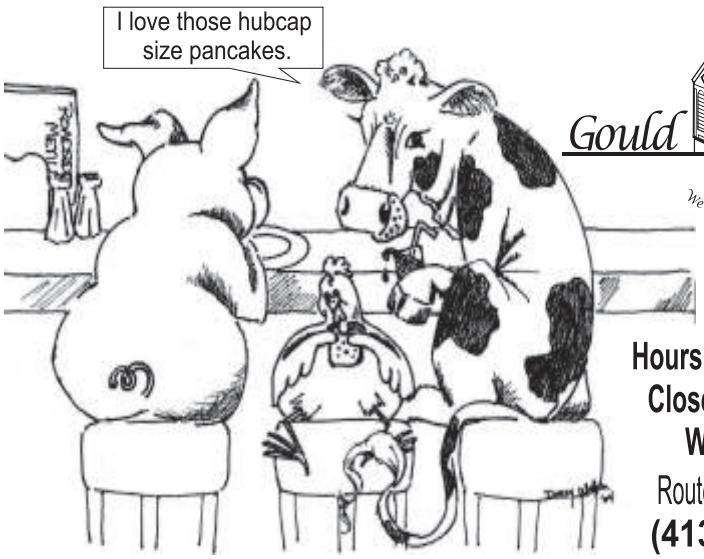

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Contributions from local artists this month:
Pat Arnow, pp. 12, 17; Maureen Banner, p. 10;
George Emmons, p. 18; Bonner McAllester, p. 16;
Edith Wilson, pp. 1, 14.

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